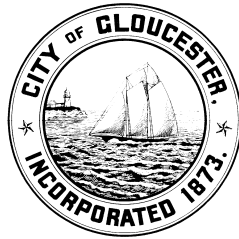


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CITY OF GLOUCESTER
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Members:

Rick Noonan, Chair, Planning Board
Paul Vitale [Absent], Fisheries Commission
Ralph Pino, Waterways Board
Greg Verga, City Council
Paul McGeary

Jeffrey Amero [Absent]
Ann Molloy
Marcy Prgent
Ron Schrank

Alternates: Mike Potter & Steve Cefalo

Also in attendance: Sarah Garcia and Kathryn Glenn.

2013 Harbor Plan

March 19, 2013
3rd Floor Conference Room, City Hall
7 - 9 pm

Meeting called to order at 7:08 PM by Chairman Rick Noonan.

Approval of Minutes from January 28, 2013. Corrections: Correct the spelling of Ann Molloy throughout; 3.7% of shore line is measured in linear feet.

MOTION: On motion by Mr. Verga, seconded by Mr. McGeary, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes from January 28, 2013 as amended.

Approval of Minutes from February 25, 2013. Corrections: On the last line of the first page it should be CZM, not DEP.

MOTION: On motion by Mr. McGeary, seconded by Mr. Pino, the Committee voted to approve the minutes from February 25, 2013 as amended. Mr. Verga abstained as he was not in attendance at that meeting.

Discussion of mission for the HPC

Mr. Noonan opened the meeting by reminding the committee that at the last meeting Mr. McGeary suggested people consider a mission statement for the committee. Mr. Noonan expressed that his hope for the night was to get a sense of the panel as citizens, and not necessarily as members of other groups they may represent. He asked that members share their thoughts on the mission of the Committee.

Ms. Pregent shared that she had researched different ports and their mission statements. This research was blended into the following mission: “The Harbor: where our past, present, and future come together. A place where people live, work, play, shop, and explore. A place that celebrates the character and tradition of maintaining a working waterfront and sustains the working industries and historic neighborhoods. A vibrant place where residents, visitors, boaters enjoy walkable waterfront, picturesque views, and natural beauty.”

Mr. Cefalo stated that his focus is around how to create jobs. This may mean a new type of working waterfront, a mix of the old and new. This could include music, artists, fishing, or more “spectator fishing”. Mr. Cefalo would like to see a mixed use harbor that focuses on jobs.

Mr. Pino stated that he looked back at the old Harbor Plan and nothing changes. This committee needs to emphasize change. Gloucester needs to step back from the waterfront. When people consider buying property on the waterfront they look at parking and permitting and then leave. The fishing industry should be one of the definitions, not the only definition.

Ms. Garcia added that the committee needs a good inventory of what is available and what we need in order to develop the waterfront. For example, parking is a real issue for development. An inventory would allow the Committee to understand what key things would move us forward. There was discussion concerning the importance of increasing the amount of dockage in the Harbor. This was followed by discussion regarding the changes currently occurring in the Harbor and how to continue and increase that change. Mr. Pino stated that it seems the 50% use change has made the biggest difference to the waterfront. Mr. Noonan suggested that maybe that is something the Committee can look at as part of their mission. Ms. Garcia acknowledged that the main recommendation from the property owner’s working group was increasing dockage, which would require regulatory change on the State level.

Mr. Potter concurred with Mr. Pino that all real estate decisions are based on money. He continued to discuss the benefits of Chapter 91 and the problems with 301 CMR 30 regulations. Mr. Potter added that local zoning is pretty good, but suggests that the Harbor be looked at as a whole, and not as little pieces of land owned by individuals. This would mean that a certain percentage of the entire Harbor should be dedicated to water dependent industrial (WDI) use and to the fishing industry. There should also be a requirement to provide a public walkway and dockage. Mr. Potter continued by suggesting that developers should have the option to develop non-water dependent use industries, but pay a price per square foot of building. Mr. Potter discussed the importance of providing value for land on the waterfront.

It was suggested at this time that the Committee should focus on the bigger picture prior to addressing specific issues or initiatives. There was discussion about the goal of the meeting. At 7:40 PM Mr. Potter dismissed himself from the meeting.

Mr. Schrank stated that there are many roadblocks to change, but they are not all insurmountable. Mr. Schrank continued with his vision of Gloucester Harbor: “My vision for Gloucester Harbor is a mixed use environment where there is opportunity for everyone to enjoy the harbor in their

own way, with no particular group having priority over another. I have read through the many ideas that came as a result of the listening posts provided by the Mayor in 2008 and believe these are worthy goals that support a mixed use harbor. Increased flexibility to promote development, additional dingy docks, diversifying uses to provide economic stability, make Gloucester a welcoming port for the transient boating community, simplify the complex regulatory and permitting environment, and so on.

However, in nearly five years since the listening posts I don't know of anything other than the harbor walk and a shuttle boat, funded by a city grant, that have come to be. And the hotel. We are still unable to draw business to the waterfront largely due to the severe restrictions created by the DPA (designated port area) laws. When a prime piece of waterfront property can't bring a response when an RFP goes out it is very telling as to what hope there is for other development on this waterfront. Development that creates employment as well as much needed tax revenue. It should be apparent that there isn't enough of the marine industrial business we hope to attract to support this harbor and we can't afford any more non tax paying nonprofits no matter how good they make us feel.

If we cannot get some relief from these outdated restrictions and attract real investors with private funding to stimulate development it will remain business as usual in the harbor and we can all watch the fishing industry dwindle while the harbor remains under-utilized and opportunities for growth are lost. We are fortunate to live near one of the most beautiful harbors on the coast, but it's a resource that needs to be utilized if Gloucester is to prosper." Mr. Schrank added that he views the DPA as a ball and chain, and there needs to be a way to buy out of it.

There was discussion regarding the DPA, how it impacts the Gloucester Harbor, and the potential need for changing DPA regulations.

Mr. Noonan summarized the discussion by stating that if you do not ask the questions, you cannot determine how best to move forward. The DPA boundary review will provide the research that will guide the direction of the committee.

Discussion occurred regarding the use of moorings in Gloucester.

Mr. Verga stated that it is not the Committee's responsibility to decide if something will work, that is on the people who develop. It is the job of this committee to consider options and determine what needs to be done to make changes possible.

Discussion occurred regarding the potential for bottom anchored floats that are allowable for recreational boats. Ms. Glenn stated that a bottom anchored float does not need a Chapter 91 license, which means it can be for recreational boats even in a DPA. What cannot be in a DPA is a Chapter 91 licensed permit. 10A permits are annual permits issued by the Harbormaster. [At the meeting it was clarified that if water and electricity were brought out to the floats, they would

then require a Ch91 permit. Therefore bottom-anchored floats that could be made available for transient boaters would not be allowed to have electricity or water service.] She added that a commercial component would make it much easier to develop a bottom anchored float for recreational boats within a DPA. Mr. Pino stated that this is an ongoing conversation at the Waterways Board. Ms. Garcia indicated that the Committee could propose that the State move forward on the regulatory changes that were drafted in response to the Property Owners Working Group proposal to allow for some amount of recreational boating.

Mr. McGeary shared his vision statement: “To recommend changes to the current Harbor Plan designed to maintain and expand Gloucester Harbor as a working waterfront. Our vision understands that fishing and fish processing are important to Gloucester’s identity, history and future, but increasingly and for various reasons are not the exclusive factor in the local economy that they once were, requiring that other maritime uses be attracted and encouraged to locate or expand on our waterfront.” Mr. McGeary added that there has been discussion about changing the regulations, but some of those roadblocks are in place intentionally. The Committee needs to consider what it is we want for our Harbor, but also what we do not want to happen. How can we preserve what is important and move toward a future that is ocean related and builds on the ocean as an asset?

Ms. Molloy stated that the idea of making every commercial business be part of the Harborwalk and have public access is not realistic because it is sometimes too dangerous. Ms. Molloy discussed several changes that have been and are occurring in the Harbor. Ms. Molloy also shared her vision: “It is my opinion that Gloucester is a working port, and needs to remain that way to stay viable. My hopes are that if the City, through this Harbor Planning process, commits to Marine Industrial uses 100%, and stops people from believing the DPA will be lifted and that they should hold out for developer dollars, we can then get some property up for sale at marine industrial prices. This will be less than developer prices, but it will create more jobs and taxes for Gloucester. Once this happens, many other companies will follow, in my opinion.

We (Neptune’s Harvest) ourselves, will continue to expand and manufacture many new products, which will help our Fishermen and our environment, by developing a market for invasive species and other species that are currently not being harvested, and create many new jobs.

After 5 years of trying to buy property on the harbor, I have come to realize this is not as easy as one may think. We had asked all of the local businesses around us, down the Fort, if they’d be willing to sell to us, and they were in “wait and see” mode, because of the mixed messages they were getting from the City, through their attempts to rezone the entire Fort, and then just the Birdseye site. We also expressed interest in buying 110 Commercial Street, from the City 3 years ago, and at first they sounded interested, and then they also went into “wait and see” mode. Just recently they’ve decided to clean it up, and put it out for bid. Because of these reasons, we had to buy inland in the Cape Ann Industrial Park. While this site is a good warehouse, it handcuffs us on many of the new products we’d like to expand into. We are currently working with the new Innovation Center, which ended up on the State Fish Pier, because the owner ran into the same problems we had, when looking to purchase waterfront MI land in Gloucester. They are helping us develop several new and exciting products, as we speak. We are just starting to see new

companies, who are interested in moving here, coming to town. Now is not the time to sell out. In ten years I see this port very active with new Marine Industrial jobs of all sorts. My worst fear is we will become like Newport, Nantucket, Newburyport, and many other ports, where you have the rich and the poor, and not much in between. Traffic will be a nightmare and True Gloucester will be lost forever. We will lose our identity and authenticity, and once it's gone, it's gone forever. The only things not allowed in a DPA is yacht marinas, and residential. This is because these are the two things that will ruin a working waterfront." Ms. Molloy asked that someone speak to why yacht marinas are not allowed in the DPA.

Ms. Garcia stated that one of the major reasons recreational marinas were not allowed in the DPA regulations was the belief that they are a market driver, which means they will squeeze out other uses. Ms. Glenn added that there is some indication that when you have very high end yachts there is often no tolerance for working industry nearby.

Ms. Garcia discussed the work of Jan Schlichtmann in Gloucester. She stated that he is working with other local people and companies on a project that is exploring ecological methods to clean salt water. They are cleaning the harbor water and growing aquatic plant walls which can then grow aquatic life such as mussels. Mr. Pino asked what this project does for the economic drive for Gloucester. Ms. Molloy stated that the aquatic life being grown can be marketed and it is also serving as a place to develop and test new products for her company. Ms. Garcia added that they will also be selling live fish using a new type of fish pot and transport system.

There was further discussion regarding aquaculture and how it may be beneficial to Gloucester's working waterfront. The Committee suggested that it may be beneficial to visit Mr. Schlichtmann's site. Mr. Verga added that he witnessed a presentation from Mr. Schlichtmann and it was very interesting. He also reiterated that it is not for the committee to decide whether or not an industry is going to work.

Mr. Verga stated that his vision for the Committee is to respect the history of the Harbor and preserve fishing, but there also needs to be some give and take along the way. He believes the Committee should not be afraid to make some recommendations to the Mayor.

Mr. Noonan indicated that part of his vision is to amplify the contributions of boards and committees that are focused on different aspects of the working harbor with the goal of promoting diverse and comprehensive plans that challenge policy makers. One of the functions of this commission is to act as a funnel or conduit to provide information to a larger audience or at least a policy making audience. The Committee can start asking tough questions, evolve the next questions, and then find out the answers. Another part of Mr. Noonan's vision is: The Harbor Planning Committee has an opportunity to deliberately pursue State and Federal planning as it relates to leverage the Harbor's assets, proximity to resources, and skilled labor. Mr. Noonan added that the Committee should know all the things on the State level that may be coming down the road.

Mr. Cefalo stated that the community values handout are five years old and nothing has changed in those five years. Mr. Cefalo suggested making a referendum question regarding the DPA. Ms. Garcia suggested that it may be too complex a question for a ballot. Mr. Cefalo suggested that it could be non-binding.

There was discussion regarding offering long term, but temporary permits for industries in the DPA. Ms. Glenn stated that there will be a benefit to working through what the Committee wants and considering the potential problems. She added that doing a good analysis strengthens any argument for moving forward with any change being sought. Ms. Glenn reiterated that the boundary review is a very specific task and will only look at what areas should be within the DPA.

Ms. Garcia stated that the amount of real estate knowledge of the Committee members is very valuable, especially in regards to making recommendations. Mr. Cefalo added that we need to make our own changes. He asked: What if we took action that was in defiance of the DPA? Discussion occurred regarding the potential options for changes in the Harbor and what information may be required in order to make suggestions.

Mr. Noonan stated that at the end of the day we need to come up with a plan from this Committee that will go to City Council, if we are to accomplish anything. Mr. Noonan discussed the need to understand the reasons why changes from the listening posts have not occurred and if the changes are still relevant. He added that he would like to see the changes proposed by this Committee evolve from the current Harbor Plan. The next step for the Committee will be to take vision and mission to create a scope for a consultant. Ms. Garcia added that the Committee will probably hold several meetings where the public is encouraged to attend and be engaged.

Mr. McGeary suggested for next meeting that all members come with one, and only one, change they would like to see and one thing they would not like to see.

Ms. Garcia referred the Committee back to the old Harbor Plan and its vision in Section 2. She encouraged committee members to review Section 4 of the original Harbor Plan and consider whether or not those things have happened, have not, should have, and what it would take to make them happen.

Mr. McGeary added that members should consider if there are things that did not happen because they were just not a good idea or are irrelevant.

Ms. Garcia stated that there have been changes that are making an impact outside of the community and will help encourage people to come to and invest in Gloucester.

MOTION: On motion by Mr. McGeary, seconded by Mr. Pino, the Committee voted to review Section 4 of the current Harbor Plan with a view towards what should have

happened, what did not happen, and what is now irrelevant and use that to begin the discussion at the next meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 PM.